

## A Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* in Malawi

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On 21st April, 1966 an immature Sooty Tern *Sterna fuscata* Linn. was picked up by T. P. Howe exhausted (it died shortly afterwards) at Lujeri, in the Mlanje District, southern Malawi, ca. 16° 00' S., 35° 45' E. It was preserved as a mounted specimen, now in the Museum of Malawi, Blantyre. It is sooty brown in colour, with white tips to the upperside feathers as shown in the accompanying photograph. Measurements are, wing 300, tarsus 25, culmen (exposed) 39 mm. The foregoing particulars and photograph (together with others taken from different angles) have been considered by C. W. Benson and Dr. D. L. Serventy, who agree with my identification. This is, of course, a maritime species, and its occurrence so



Photograph by Robert Eden

Immature *Sterna fuscata* from Malawi

far inland is most unusual. The nearest point on the sea-coast from Lujeri is in the vicinity of Quelimane, Mozambique, some 150 miles away in a south-easterly direction. The only other traced records inland from the eastern seaboard of Africa are also very recent. They are from the Transvaal, and were apparently the result of a cyclone: see editorial in *Bokmakierie*, 18(1), 1966: 22, and Wilson, *ibid.*, 18(2), 1966: 42. The weather conditions leading up to the Malawi recovery were briefly as follows.

On 20th April there were strong winds, blowing from the east over southern Mozambique, thence from the south over southern Malawi, *i.e.* blowing directly up the Shire Valley. Thunderstorms occurred along the lower reaches of the Shire in the late afternoon and evening of the 20th, and on the following morning there was extensive fog and low stratus.